Social Structure, Involuntary Relations, and Urban Poverty

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Abstract—This article deals with special structuralism approaches to explain a certain kind of social problem. Widespread presence of poverty is a reminder of deep-rooted unresolved problems of social relations. The expected role from an individual for the social system recognizes poverty derived from an interrelated social structure. By the time, enabled to act on his role in the course of social interaction, reintegration of the poor in society may take place. Poverty and housing type are reflections of the underlying social structure, primarily structure's elements, systemic interrelations, and the overall strength or weakness of that structure. Poverty varies based on social structure in that the stronger structures are less likely to produce poverty.

Keywords—Absolute poverty, relative poverty, social structure, urban poverty.

I. Introduction

THE goal of research aims to investigate why poverty exists, despite the fact that social institutions are at work. It further considers the social factors that contribute to poverty along with how can positive interplay of an agent and structure eliminate it. While the term agency refers to action, the term subject has been used by structuralists for 'individual' and 'actor' alternately to reject the idea that they are the originators of social relations [1]. People belong to the society, which is in turn living together. Common life already implies a sense of togetherness, since each person counts a member of society. As society puts value on social progress, then everyone can by active participation receive a share of resources. Meanwhile, segments of society suffer from inability to get a daily livelihood on account of insufficient earning of any type. Such a threatening situation brings this question into forth, why some people suffer from absolute poverty, along with others that can afford to pay their bills, suffer from relative poverty. Families in the latter condition experience some degrees of satisfaction with the ability to manage their life economically by retaining fewer resources than those of others. In fact, poverty counts as a major social problem for the government that calls for focused attention of relevant offices to do something. Life, with poverty, renders society imperfect status in its appearance and action. It embodies social disorganization that comes from the breakdown of the rules of conduct, the reverse of that improves disadvantaged family well-being which will eventually ensure realization of social aspirations.

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II. Literature Review

The beginning of structuralism theory returns to the work of Vico in 1725 [2]. Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916 during a linguistics study put forward the idea that during speech, a person uses subjective way of language, which is "parole" but the systematic, formal, grammatical system of language is "langue" [1]. The structure of language (invisible structure) shapes mind, people, and hereby created their social relations (visible structure) [3]. Language expresses structure, which has either concrete or abstract content and finds priority to it. The structure, by taking new elements to itself during the time, has a changing character. For a summary of basic terms of structuralism, refer to Table I. According to [1], the conceptualization of an underlying structure of language in de Saussure's approach consists of the following three major concepts:

1. The sign is an arbitrary combination of a signifier (the material element, sound image, graphic image, marks on paper) and a signified (mental image, a differentiated item of thought, the thing itself). It is also the product of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, specific to a particular language. "Syntagmatic relation unites elements present in a speech chain. For example, I'm cold. The cold has syntagmatic relation with I'm. Paradigmatic relationship unites terms in a mnemonic series. The cold has paradigmatic relation with words cool, chill, and freezing" [1]. The signifier and signified are the smallest unit of linguistic signs. Language as vital closed system makes it greater than its content. The sign has no reference to something outside its expression.

2. Each language uses a particular word to describe particular objects and concepts. There is no specific criterion, why a sign expresses a signifier. The choice of word is an arbitrary matter.

3. Language consists of signs that are the product of a system of differences (alphabet, grammar, and lexicon). Comprehension of a sentence occurs, when the word differences related to other similar words become clear.

J. Lacan concerning the Freud's psychoanalysis and de Saussure's structural linguistics argues, language has a structure like that of individual consciousness, but an individual's consciousness is not self-sufficient. Therefore, he becomes a follower of culture (symbolic order) [1], [2]. Reference [2] states "the idea that there is an unconscious logical structure is common to all structuralist approaches. It determines the logic of myth (as in Levi-Strauss)".

Social scientists who also developed structuralism approaches in their works were; R. Jakobson, K. Marx, S.

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Blackburn, J. Searle, L. Althusser, N. Poulantzas, J. Piaget, P. Bourdieu, T. Parsons, E. Durkheim, M. Godelier, and G. Simmel. A theoretical perspective was prevailing between the period of the late 1960s and early 1970s [1]. Disciplines of social anthropology, linguistics, literary criticism, psychoanalysis, and sociology incorporated it into scientific analysis [1]. Critics of structuralism called post-structuralism the major proponent of which are P. Chomsky, M. Foucault, J. Derrida, and R. Barthes stress on priority of social action over social structure.

TABLE I
HIGHLIGHTS OF STRUCTURALISM THEORY

| Topic	View
History	It is marked by discontinuity and radical changes not evolution.
Agent	An agent who is product of relations retains a decentered conception of the self.
Structure	It has a centralized and closed totality, which gets precedence over social action. Underlying structures can be distinguished.
Language	Significatory.
Social phenomenon	Socially constructed.
Social system	Cluster of norms and meanings.
Society	A language created phenomenon.
Socialization	A necessary process for the acquisition of social structure.
Structural determination	The structure determines actor's behavior.
Structure-agent based explanation	An agent as content places in the structural form.
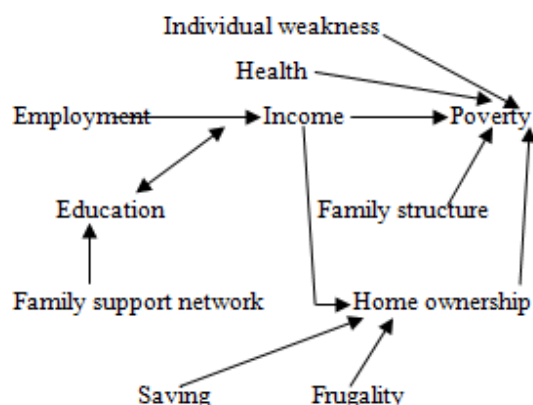
Fig. 1 Path diagram of the causal connections between poverty and social structure

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does lack of family support network, which is a measure of help and resource exchange among family members and relatives, in absolute poverty reduce the educational aspiration of student?

2. Does employment influence discontinuity with education, which in turn affects the likelihood of getting access to high skilled jobs?

3. How far is poverty dependent on family structure, family type, family size, loss of breadwinner, health, age, number of children and sex?

4. To what extent does absolute poverty depend on individual weakness?

5. Do people without home-ownership experience relative poverty?

6. Do people live in relative poverty because of not saving money and not being frugal?

Fig. 1 represents a connectivity of related variables.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURALISM

People needed to meet their objectives by the establishment of entities, when they scattered across the globe. These entities created internal relations based on roles and interrelated themselves with other entities, as each fulfilled a particular task. During lengthy time periods, these entities developed into social institutions which beyond their goals, complemented the requirements set by other social institutions producing miscellaneous relations. The social structure became a product of network of relations among social institutions both internally and externally.

The psychoanalytic ability of the human mind thinking in binary opposition (up/down) proposed by C. Levi-Strauss in anthropological studies [1], [2] enabled people to organize their language, kinship system, and society [3]. It precedes the material and the cultural structure. The land in which they settled in, had gone through geologic structure formation of the past epoch that formed present particular geographical characteristics with its own effects on people. Based on structural Marxism mental categories of a laborer and a non-laborer were generative of social relations. These three principles as the underlying structure affecting social relations were unconsciously operative [1].

Every society had these relatively constant structural elements whose diversified relations led to forming different types of societies with their own language and system of ideas [1]. Accordingly, every structure is product of particular laws. Reality consists of relations among elements of a structure, something that is not visible as an object is [1]. The entity as a material construction is also the outcome of a production process. Meanwhile, language, norms, collective representations, and physical economy as an outcome of unconscious structure of mind [2] in every particular land influenced the way that people organized their lives. Combined impact of these aspects in each territory led to the emergence of every specific society. These combinations were sometimes incomplete formation of structure in different places, in subsequent different societies with different structures appeared in the world. Some put values on particular relations, but others organized those relations differently. Thus, relying on the C. Levi-Strauss view about constant principles, every society can be regarded as the product of unconscious structural elements (psychological structure of the human mind, principle of geology, and position in mode of production). Social structure determines the path for the agent to follow, should he wants to arrive at his goals.

Rationality does not belong to the assumptions of structuralism by virtue of the fact that the subject's actions have directions and are not randomly performed [4]. In fact, rational structural commands determine the subject's position

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given human limitation. Accordingly, a decentralized view of the subject's self exists. Reciprocity of structure-agent relations determines the subject's position rather than the other way round. The subject retaining a decentered position, is also a product of relations. Treating the subject in any particular way especially by discourse constitutes his identity.

V. Hypotheses

1. The family support network increases student's educational aspiration which will eventually motivate him to study toward higher education. The need for necessary support motivates the student to continue studying.
2. Shortage of material resources constrains young to quit school and enter the labor market. It appears as a common pattern among working class families.
3. Presence of both parents in the family can overcome absolute poverty. This idea assumes that at least one of the partners can work to prevent absolute poverty. Furthermore, it may correlate with family type, size, health, age, sex, number of children, and loss of breadwinner.
4. Individual weakness is culpable of absolute poverty due to inappropriate response from individual to the demands of social systems. This group is most likely to fall into absolute poverty.
5. People without home-ownership fall into the category of relative poverty with regard to the fact that they have sufficient and regular income, but do not guarantee transmission of property to their next generation.
6. Home-ownership depends on saving money and being frugal provided that families have regular income above certain level. Negligent people retain faulty beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about economic life. Absence of discretion makes them forgetful of saving money. Contrasted with, their counterparts, they engage in relative poverty.

VI. Variables

A. Independent Variables

Family support network (nominal scale), family structure (nominal scale), frugality (nominal scale), saving (ordinal scale), individual weakness (ordinal scale), employment (nominal scale)

B. Dependent Variables

Income (interval scale), education (ordinal scale), home-ownership (nominal scale)

C. Control Variables

Age (interval scale), sex (nominal scale), family type (nominal scale), family size (interval scale), loss of breadwinner (nominal scale), health (nominal scale), number of children (interval scale), substandard housing (interval scale).

VII. Operationalization

- Age: old age (elderly-65 years and older).
- Sex: 1. male 2. female.

- Absolute poverty: 1. no income 2. low income 3. irregular income 4. no Social Security recipient.
- Relative poverty: a.1. regular income 2. no home-ownership. b.1. no home-ownership 2. Social Security recipient.
- Family type: 1. small family (up to 4 persons) 2. large family (5 persons or more).
- Family size: number of persons in the household.
- Family structure: 1. nuclear family (two-biological-parents and children live together) 2. Single-parent family (mother-headed) 3. Single-parent family (father-headed) 4. father/stepmother family 5. mother/stepfather family 6. extended family (several generations live in one household together) 7. childless family 8. grandparent family 9. reconstituted family (families have already divorced, but later remarried and formed one family living together) 10. live alone.
- Loss of breadwinner: 1. yes 2. no.
- Health: 1. healthy 2. unhealthy (the long term sick and disabled).
- Family support network: 1. schooling support 2. schooling advice.
- Employment: 1. employed 2. unemployed (old age).
- Substandard housing: percentage of living in low-rent areas.
- Home-ownership: percentage of homes owner-occupied.
- Frugality: Abstaining from extra expenditures.
- Saving: last visit to a bank.
- Individual weakness: 1. idleness 2. imprudence 3. fatalism 4. resignation.
- Education: 1. some high school 2. high school graduate 3. some college 4. trade/technical/vocational training 5. college graduate 6. some postgraduate work 7. post graduate degree.

VIII. Research Methodology

To carry out the research empirically the methodology will include the following process. Pedestrian in the street, everyone eligible to poverty, and those living in the poor districts belong to the sampling unit. For the reliability of statistical tests, a sample of considerable size will be required. This number represents the target population to whom generalization will be applied. The sampling frame is either secondary data gathered by official statistics or primary data to be gathered alternately. Survey method applicable to the topic demands to get use of systematic random sampling for gathering data by application of questionnaire. Causal explanation of a social phenomenon and its connectivity with social laws demands structuralism as decisive explanatory theory. The study in general includes both descriptive and multivariate analysis (ordinary least square regression).

IX. Historical Context

The essential problem of poverty concerns earlier conditions that gave rise to the changes in the family. For most of the 18th century, the majority of people lived in rural areas

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in the United States [5]. At earlier times work on farmlands, handicrafts, and small shops was a major type of livelihood. People obtained their livelihood mostly in places, which were not far from the place they lived in. The family was at that time an active part of the economic productive unit at farms or in shops. It prepared members for work and contributed to work duties actively.

With the advent of the steam engine that advanced growth of industrialization in western society, machines replaced tasks with a massive increase in fabricating goods and wealth. New machinery changed the way people earned their livelihood. Factories located around the cities grasped flow of the labor force from farms and small businesses to the cities. Parallel expansion of urban areas occurred as people moved from rural areas and smaller cities to these areas gradually. The family served no longer as an economic production unit once it did [5]. It served instead to prepare members for public arena and for the work carried out in industrial plants. Intercity and countrywide movements to improve life economically replaced those circumstances that allowed frequent contact with community including friends, relatives, and neighbors.

As the cities expanded they became home to heterogeneous people of diverse cultural, traditional, and ethnic background whose values and aspirations occasionally led to conflict. Since social institutions were not able to afford traditional transmission of values that insisted on sense of community, social disorganization appeared [5]. Industrialization, which led to rapid expansion of cities marked new era. Some people as a by-product of radical transformations that eroded some basic communal values that once held people together prior to urbanization were not able to manage their life economically.

X. Acquisition of Life Perspective during Socialization

Absolute poverty is transmitted from one generation to another. Since the poor family cannot supervise the child adequately, the child will not in turn be able to take advantage of his ability to cope with imminent problems in life. He and his parents alike should only think about how to make livelihood that is sometimes, lower than daily necessities. Owing to distance from economical and social standards, behavioral patterns to connect people to each other do not develop well upon certain standards. In addition, life in an indigent community does not supplement ideal patterns of moralities among peer groups. Even if the malnutrition is not an urgent problem, it is more likely under such circumstances, faulty belief, attitude, and behavior develop. Partners may not even be able to think in spite of the fact that they can not afford to have a child, why a child should be born who will also suffer from the same problem. For this reason, dissatisfied basic human needs without thought are transformed to the next generation.

The poor do not have a tangible grasp of rich life perspective. On account of no idea about quality of life, people's conception of desirable perspective locates in the margin. Restricted perspective plus difficulties of making a living turns the ability to reach more accessible goals to vegetation. The reference group rests on their own community

[1] which in turn reduces one's motive to search for improving the present condition. Attitude toward progress rests on random future opportunities for upward social mobility, in which the impact of an insecure life can lead to missing opportunities. Similarly, when people express during conversations inferior ideas about wealth accumulation, they identify with faulty beliefs. In fact, the cycle perpetuates itself.

Inappropriate socialization leaves the subject feeble in responding to the demands of social systems. In the positive step, motivated people confront future by gaining upward social mobility which improves their economic status for the betterment. Those who get advantage of education to develop their potential as an individual attain crucial means to proceed. It makes them aware of their situation by recovery from paucity by gaining access to higher educational level, which ensures them occupational attainment of secure work. Timely schooling support given to the child by relatives, produces a noticeable impact on his education. Withdrawal of support reduces educational aspiration of the person who needs it. In the context of absolute poverty, urgent household education, even in most cases for the parents themselves becomes crucial. Adult education provided by formal public control improves the circumstance of illiterate partners by facilitating their behavioral integration in the community, so far as financial support of any kind accompanies them. In the negative step, misfortune associated with differential association may lead them to deviance. The so-called 'street society' related to difficult life experienced by poor urban families, provides a suitable background in formation of gangs and juvenile delinquency. As poverty merges with deviance, life takes the worst form to itself.

XI. Structural Influences on Poverty

Inability of the poor urban family in the meeting of the child needs at home transforms itself to decline in attendance and continuity at school. Unsuccessful educational achievement constrains the child to quit school and enter labor market with minimum qualification, which in some places lead to child labor. Decreasing number of students makes education system in turn disable to produce required skilled labor force. Absence of law to set up order by preventing astray of the child makes another component of social structure dysfunctional. In the meantime, inaccessibility of regular medical care reduces individual's responsiveness to work. A situation which also leaves society exposed to infraction due to unattended psychiatric treatment of its members. As institutions are not capable of contributing to each other's task, a component and sometimes, depending on the problem a larger component of the social structure lags behind. An interrelated systemic disharmony prevails. If the child takes advantage of preparation at home, but schooling for any reason is insufficient for him, child's behavior toward success in school will not constrain to proceed considering the view that [6] states "well-defined properties of social structures (or occupancy of particular positions within them) constrain behavior". The remained problem takes a different form. Among social institutions informed by their properties,

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intertwined complex relations over a period of time constitute a particular type of person, group, and society. That might be a possible commentary for differences among societies concerning their level of development.

According to the Wisconsin model put forward by Sewell and Hauser on status attainment, family background and ascription affect the student's occupational status and earnings via the student's ability and academic achievement. It comes from student's educational aspirations and attainment that take effect from parental and peer influences. Reference [7], by explaining the impact of the model on educational attainment, states that status attainment in American society is indeed a meritocratic process, since the disadvantages of family background can be overcome through schooling. Merit encompasses ability (intelligence) and effort. A system in getting use of talent facilitates upward social mobility of students toward status attainment, who can undertake specialized roles. Social inequality created by education system not social class involves competition among students to occupy positions with consequent accumulation of wealth, status, and power as scarce resources. Equality of educational outcomes inadvertently provides the ground for those without adequate schooling to be filtered out into the labor market. Hard work remains an alternative solution for less educated counterparts. In case of disability for work and no family support, this condition drives the subject on the verge of poverty. Dearth of talent makes him engage in unskilled labor which does not require a certain level of schooling.

Countries differ with their approach to the problem of poverty because it differs from that in other countries. When the poor people in the search for work in a country cannot attend the school, they get aid from the welfare system to recover from the dilemma. It includes state administered provisioning of medical insurance, housing, training, and financial support during joblessness, etc. The Social Security system is an equivalent of a welfare program, but content of the plan varies across countries. In other societies, where no systematic relief plan is available, the state efforts to eliminate the problem with alternative means. In a book review by B. R. Bergmann from the authors G.A. Cornia and S. Danziger about child poverty in 29 industrialized countries, writes [8] that, single-parent family is the most vulnerable group who needs "the provision of expensive services such as housing, child care, and health care that the public can see as a direct help to the children themselves is probably the most promising way to reduce child poverty". In some developing countries, Muslims collect money from the rich by religious mechanism and distribute it to the neediest.

Definition of social structure as patterned social activities [1] shows that parts of society are faced with inability to contribute to the activities experienced by the majority. Society acts incomplete whose failure attributes to inability of multiple collaborative action to absorb the poor into its composition. To clarify the situation, an experimental method may be useful. The study requires allocating ordinary people to control group and the poor to the experimental group. A measure of social activities experienced by both groups reveals differences. It determines the activities which are experienced adequately and the ones which are underutilized. Relevant themes include the amount of access to the necessary degree items like food (family), medicine (health), schooling (education), income (work) etc. Identifying the gap, which is the difference among the activities of both groups, helps fill out the gaps by low performance systems. Accordingly, rehabilitative plans are necessary to aid deprived to recover from the dilemma. A typical plan for improving the socioeconomic status of the family might include control of pricing system by the government rather than individuals themselves. Regulatory financial policies also prevent low wages for the poor and decrease expensive professional service costs. Complementary plans consider the subsequent integration of the poor with the society by renovating their unsanitary houses. Moreover, the development of neighborhood (voluntary) associations in the poor areas, prepares families for brighter acquaintance with the values of morality, right, and responsibility and works with their personality by engaging them in recreational activities in an emotional and creative way.

Based on social structure, the subject has to work to earn money. That almost every job needs specialized training, but prevailing inefficient job market with no possibility of the occupational training then makes both structure and agent at the time of employment not responsive to each other's demand effectively. A fact which impels mind about viewing the planning of matching jobs with precise credentials during recruitment process, along with the support of jobless. It prevents dispersion of labor force, improves the quality of work in reality, and leads to higher degrees of job market stability.

Specific way of thinking, nevertheless, may ensue by welfare system. The future of the child among families without home-ownership is subject to controversy, although they can pay their bills. When the family wishes to buy a home that it can not afford, it might be able to buy one with the secure income to raise a loan for house-purchase. The less unified family fails regarding the capacity to plan for the future of its child. The family learns primarily socially that it has to spend the money that it earns following its wishes because of welfare payments for each person. Subsequently the family is accustomed to spend the payment that it receives even in case of steady employment. On the contrary, if partners have felt responsibility that their child's fate has priority over their needs, they would have behaved frugally and saved money for their child instead of spending it on personal wishes. In so doing, the child can get out of relative poverty by inheriting a house from his parents. Partners do not conform to the expected parental responsibility, since they are living in public housing indifferently. Conversely, an efficient change in the structure of the cultural system strengthens owner-occupied home attitude among people, with various incentives directed to it. Reference [5] grants home-ownership with great possibility one of the best indicators of social stability and family unity, cohesiveness, and discipline. The

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family can enjoy security in life by having a house that belongs to it legally.

XII. CONCLUSION

The subject engages in his role(s) during social interactions by what he has learned during the socialization process, which is itself partially component of a larger social structure. Inadequate socialization constitutes a subject without desirable life perspective that can potentially turn out his future interpersonal relations into conflict. The subject's self constitutes by the internalization of objects of the surrounding physical environment which follows local patterns of substandard housing. In addition, every person with whom the subject interacts constitutes his identity by the medium of language in which their mental structure operates. The subject's constituted self, serves him as dynamic in action.

An inquiry into the cause of absolute poverty indicates the possibility of an overall multiple involuntary counterproductive systemic and structural relations that fails to take into account the subject's needs. In other words, some elements of society may not have the capability to work as expected. Depending on the society and the strength or weakness of the different structures, it might be due to lack of high public standard of living which includes housing, health, political stability, legal security, clean ecology, cultural program, education, and freedom of expression just as combined impact of several negative factors like antagonism instead of respect and allegiance do. Inequality especially in educational achievement is a justifiable feature of institutions. Alignment of elaborated learning methods, development of more efficient tools for doing jobs, perfection of medical sciences in providing remedy and robust economy protected by an advanced justice system minimize the conditions that bear upon genesis of poverty. Another deterrent factor is the prevalence of self oriented attitudes toward accumulating wealth in which the value of home-ownership is underrecognized.

Not only do properties of social structure retain formal characteristics but the poor also is not able enough to engage in his role during social interactions. Therefore, some basic financial support complemented by education seems the most effective means to help someone recover from misfortune and get connected to the society by dignified living condition. Poverty will reproduce itself unless an improvement of social structure abrogates it. It can be supervised by state policies continuously, until the needy becomes self-reliant.

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